

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-13 ACDA-07 /086 W
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P R 250922Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7594
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 4461

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, RP, LY, XF
SUBJECT: "TENTATIVE SOLUTION" TO MINDANAO PROBLEM

REF: MANILA 4278

SUMMARY: GOP HAS ANNOUNCED NO FURTHER DETAILS OF "TENTATIVE SOLUTION" TO MINDANAO PROBLEM ALTHOUGH LEADING COLUMNIST HAS SURFACED SOME PRESUMED PORTIONS OF THE SOLUTION. GOP IS OBVIOUSLY EXTREMELY NERVOUS ABOUT PUBLICIZING AGREEMENT. PRESIDENT MAY GIVE FURTHER EXPLANATION IN TELEVISED ADDRESS TONIGHT (MARCH 25). NO FURTHER WORD ON MRS. MARCOS WHEREABOUTS. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER DETAILS AS SOON AS AVAILABLE. END COMMENT.

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS REMAINED SILENT ON DETAILS OF "TENTATIVE SOLUTION" FOR MINDANAO PROBLEM ANNOUNCED MARCH 22 (REFTEL). COLUMNIST VALENCIA OF DAILY EXPRESS, WHO WAS APPARENTLY BRIEFED ON AGREEMENT, COMMENTED MARCH 24 THAT ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, QADHAFI AND MARCOS "HAVE ALL CONFIRMED THAT BASIC GUIDE-
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LINES OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION." VALENCIA SAID: BEGIN
QUOTE: IN THE ORDER OF PRIORITY, THEN, IT WILL FIRST BE A PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION CONSISTING OF 13 PROVINCES. THEN, ON APRIL 17, THE PEOPLE IN THESE 13 PROVINCES WILL VOTE WHETHER THEY LIKE TO BELONG TO THE REGION OR NOT. AFTER THE PLEBISCITE, THE MODUS OPERANDI OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION WILL BE

PLOTTED THROUGH A PREPARATORY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL COUNT ON MNLF MEMBERS (SIC). AFTER THAT, THE GENERAL ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO THE ASSEMBLY TO RUN THE REGION. THIS, UNDOUBTEDLY, WILL BE COMPOSED BY A MOTLEY OF REGIONS AND TRIBES. END QUOTE.

2. HE CONTINUED, "THERE WILL BE NO SEPARATION OF ANY PORTION OF THE REPUBLIC...NO INDEPENDENT ARMIES -- ONLY THE AFP WILL BE CHARGED WITH THE DUTY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND INTERNAL SECURITY. AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT WILL REMAIN UNDIMINISHED. NOBODY IN THE 13 PROVINCES CAN OBJECT TO SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT."

3. HOWEVER, IN TODAY'S COLUMN (MARCH 25), VALENCIA SAID THAT DETAILS OF TRIPOLI AGREEMENT CONCLUDED BY MRS. MARCOS AND QADHAFI "WILL BE ANNOUNCED OFFICIALLY AFTER PROPER PROTOCOLAR ARRANGEMENTS ARE COMPLETED. MEANTIME, WHAT YOU ARE GETTING AS SPILLS (SIC) OF THE AGREEMENT, IS AT BEST, UNOFFICIAL."

4. IN A SPEECH BEFORE PHILIPPINE ROTARY CLUB MARCH 24, FORMER SENATOR TOLENTINO DISCUSSED AGREEMENT, REVEALING NO FURTHER DETAILS AND EMPHASIZING THAT ALL ASPECTS SUBJECT TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. TOLENTINO'S REMARKS NOT REPEAT NOT REPORTED BY PRESS.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT MAY DISCUSS MINDANAO PROBLEM ON TELEVISION THIS EVENING. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, SUCH PLANS ALWAYS SUBJECT TO LAST MINUTE CHANGE.
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6. PRESS HAS NOT MENTIONED WHEREABOUTS OF MRS. MARCOS SINCE REPORTING HER STOPOVER IN LONDON AND SCHEDULED CALL ON KING OF SAUDI ARABIA.

7. COMMENT: IT IS ABUNDANTLY EVIDENT THAT MARCOS IS EXTREMELY NERVOUS ABOUT PUBLICIZING AGREEMENT WHICH (IF VALENCIA IS CORRECT) REPRESENTS GOP BACK-TRACKING AND ACCESSION TO MNLF DEMAND THAT AUTONOMOUS REGION BE PROCLAIMED BY DECREE (I.E. WITHOUT PRIOR PLEBISCITE). WHATEVER SORT OF REFERENDUM OR PLEBISCITE TAKES PLACE AFTER THE FACT WOULD, WE ASSUME, BE MEANINGLESS, ALTHOUGH IT MAY ENABLE GOVERNMENT TO CLAIM THAT IT IS KEEPING ITS WORD ABOUT FOLLOWING CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. SUCH TACTICS WILL NOT FOOL ANYONE, BUT THEY MAY ENABLE MARCOS TO PREVENT DISINTEGRATION OF CEASEFIRE, PERHAPS UNTIL AFTER ISLAMIC CONFERENCE MEETS IN TRIPOLI IN MAY OR JUNE. WILL PROVIDE FURTHER ANALYSIS WHEN DETAILS OF "TENTATIVE SOLUTION" HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY

RELEASED.
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